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News

Cisco To Launch New CCNA Exam,A dd Two-Exam Option for Less-Experienced Candidates

6/23/2003 -- This week ati ts Networkers conference in Orlando,C isco Systems will announce a new Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA) exam,6 40-801,t o launch June 30.

The current CCNA exam (640-607),w hich debuted in March 2002,i ncludes understanding the functions and operations of local area networks (L N), Cisco IOS fundamentals, wide area networks (WAN), virtual private networks (VPN), and Storage Area Networks (SAN). Othert opics covered are IP Addressing,C isco Command Line Interface (CLI), Routing and Switching technologies and protocols.(*Editor's Note:*T CPmag.com provides a review oft his exam, written by CCNP Andy Barkl, here.)

Nader Nanjiani, marketing programs manager of the InternetL earning Solutions Group at Cisco, said the 801 version of the CCNA exam has been   dated to cover switching configuration, Open ShortestP ath First (OSPF) and Enhanced Interior Gateway Routing Protocol (EIGRP)p rotocols, and variable length subnet masking.

"This exam is more in-depth than 607, nota reduction," he commented. "These topics were already included in the ICND class that we're teaching now... [So] anyone who's taken the [Interconnecting Cisco Network Devices) course that was already out,[he or she] should be able to pass the new exam,b ecause now [the exam]c overs the chapters that weren't necessarily covered before."

The 640-607 exam is scheduled to retire Sept. 30, although can   dates will be able to take the exam into early October as long as they schedule the test by the earlierd ate.

Att he same technical conference for Cisco professionals, the company will also announce a new two-exam approach to the CCNA.

According to Nanjiani,t he two new exams --I NTRO 640-821 and ICND 640-811 -- cover exactly the same contenta s the soon-to-debut 801 exam, but the information is split,w ith higher-level content in the ICND, and lower-level content in INTRO. "Now you have the option of taking a single exam if you can handle the contenti n one fell swoop...or piecemeal if you wantt o take more time," Nanjiani explained.

The INTRO testi s currently available in beta form as 641-821.N anjiani estimated thati t would be available in live form in eight to 12 weeks. A corresponding course will be available later in July.T he ICND exam will be available on June 30. Each exam will be valid for three years.

Nanjiani said that candidates will be able to choose for themselves which CCNA path to take; Cisco is only recommending that those with less networking experience choose the two-exam option." We were hearing from ourt raining partners that people were coming to the ICND class and having a difficult time keeping up...they didn't have the networking background," he explained." No one is going to stop you, but [the INTR   exam]i s a way for an individual to see how he or she stands before jumping into the ICND courses."

With the two-exam approach,c andidates need to take the required ex   s within three years of each other to earn their CCNA. Both exams are 30 minutes shorter than the typical Cisco exam (60 minutes vs. 90 minutes) and will cost $100 each as opposed to the standard $125.

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Passing either the ICND or INTRO exams alone does note arn the candidate any title, Nanjiani said, although current CCNAs will be allowed to use the new ICDN exam as a renewal requirement.

Nanjiani said that the company may consider offering a similar two-exam path for its Cisco Certfied Design Associate (CCDA) title, depending on customer feedback.

More information on these announcements should be published on Cisco's Web site here on Tuesday. -Becky Nagel, Dian L. Schaffhauser

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